

wish to live based on the quality of the public schools in a given neighborhood. They vote with their feet, by moving to the school district of their choice. But many parents lack the means to choose the neighborhood with the best schools, or they lack the flexibility to move to a better neighborhood because of their work.

Republicans want to help parents. We want to make school choice available for more parents, because we trust parents to make the right choice for their children. That is why we support school choice.

PUBLIC EDUCATION IS THE ENGINE OF PROGRESS

(Mr. UNDERWOOD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to take strong objection to the derisive tone about public schools, labeled "government schools," as we debate the merits of vouchers. Universal public schooling is uniquely American and is the basis for the progress of this Nation.

We forget that basic public education has sustained this country through difficult times. It was the engine of industrial development, made the 21st century the American century, and makes us the leader in the Information Age. We have forgotten the intrinsic relationship between our public schools, not someone else's government schools, and our national development.

If there are problems, and there certainly are, then let us fix them with resources and reform, and that is what we stand for on this side of the aisle. But we must remember that reform means altering to improve, not to deny resources so that improvement cannot occur.

Regardless of what has been stated, this is the bottom line on vouchers. It is an elitest idea masquerading as a public benefit which will radically restructure the very American school system that has made possible the progress we enjoy as Americans.

Are there any John Deweyes or Horace Manns left in this country?

EMPOWER PARENTS AND TEACHERS, NOT BUREAUCRATS

(Mr. ROGAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, we Republicans have one basic, simple belief when it comes to education. We believe in empowering parents and teachers. We do not believe in empowering Federal bureaucrats. For all the good intentions of those who believe that Washington regulators should run our public schools, no Federal program can be designed to get parents to teach children to read at night or get them to love books.

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No Federal program will ever teach children to admire virtue. No Federal program will bring us orderly classrooms. No Federal program will help when children fail to do their homework.

If children have to pass through metal detectors on their way to school and be in daily fear while trying to obtain an education, no Federal program from Washington is going to correct that situation.

More importantly, when it comes to those Members of Congress looking to Federal bureaucrats to fix our schools, I can only say that no Federal program will give them common sense. We need to empower parents and teachers, and move away from Washington trying to run our schools.

That is the only solution available to ensure our children will obtain a world-class education from world-class schools.

HOUSE SHOULD REPEAL \$50 BILLION TAX BREAK FOR TOBACCO INDUSTRY

(Mr. DOGGETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, yesterday one body in this Congress voted to repeal the \$50 billion tax break bestowed on the tobacco industry by this Gingrich-led House. Now this House must do the same and do it immediately.

Some may view it as a mere coincidence that the No. 1 contributor in this country of corrupting soft money to the Republican Party is Philip Morris Tobacco. The No. 2 contributor of corrupting soft money in this country to the Republican Party is R.J. Reynolds Tobacco. Together they gave about \$1 million in soft money to the Republican Party in the first 6 months of this year, and in month 7 their industry received a \$50 billion tax break, a tax break buried under the title "Small Business Job Protection" in the balanced budget tax agreement.

Speaker GINGRICH, schedule votes on both the ban on soft money and the repeal of this \$50 billion tax break for the tobacco industry on the same day. Eliminating two such evils at once would not be a coincidence in this special interest Congress, it would be a miracle.

THE ART OF BEING FREE

(Mr. WELDON of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, one reason why education is such an important issue is because it is education which should play such a vital role in teaching, in the words of Alexis de Toqueville, "the art of being free."

Mr. Speaker, few Americans these days think about the art of being free,

I suspect, and few schools talk about the democracy and the American republic in terms of the art of being free. But all one has to do is look around the world and it is quite obvious that societies are free not by virtue of free elections alone; not by the virtue of a written constitution that guarantees freedom on paper only; not by virtue of a judicial system that promises justice, but is corrupted by arbitrary Government power and police misconduct.

No, Mr. Speaker, the art of being free must be taught at home, cultivated in school, and given free expression and practice. The habits of freedom are encouraged in schools through the study of the uniqueness of America, our belief in individual rights over group rights, our history of forward-looking optimism, and the shared faith in the availability of the American dream to all.

SPECIAL INTEREST CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS CORRUPT DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

(Mr. MILLER of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, we now know where Speaker GINGRICH stands on campaign finance reform. The Speaker does not think there is enough money. He says they ought to be able to give any amount they want. Let everyone go play.

Mr. Speaker, when those people gave hundreds of thousands of dollars in soft money, they were not playing. When they met in the minority whip's office to gut the Clean Water Act of this Nation, they were not playing. When they met with the leadership to gut the environmental laws of this Nation, they were not playing.

Mr. Speaker, they are not playing when they give hundreds of thousands of dollars and then try to stop food safety laws in this Nation, and they certainly were not playing late at night last month when they got a \$50 billion tax cut for the tobacco companies.

No, Mr. Speaker, these are not people who are playing. These are special interests who are corrupting this democratic process, who are corrupting this House, who are corrupting this Senate, and who are corrupting the election process in this Nation.

This is about hard ball. This is about special interests, tax preferences and gifts of public resources to campaign contributors.

SCHOOL CHOICE EMPOWERS CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

(Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, while Democrats are busy trying to come up with new excuses

why working families should be denied the same educational opportunities that the liberal Washington elite's own children enjoy, innovative Governors and mayors throughout the country are moving forward with school choice.

Democrats say they are not really against working families. Of course, they simply do not mind keeping families trapped in bad schools, for liberals prefer instead promises to reform these bad schools through the magic of the Federal Government. Many of these politicians have idealistic visions about how working families can cope with Government-owned schools in which children do not feel safe, where dumbing down trumps excellence, and where burned out teachers rotate in and out of classrooms more often than the Yankees try new managers.

Mr. Speaker, they propose to, get this, pump more money into the very same Government schools that have failed them year after year after year, with no mention of changes in structure or in methods.

A generation of illiterates does not deter Washington liberals in their misdirected intentions. Everyone at their cocktail parties is in agreement that denying school choice for everyone else's children is a victory for the Washington bureaucracy. Republicans have a different idea: School choice empowers children and their families.

HOUSE SHOULD HEED AMERICA'S CRY FOR CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

(Mrs. MINK of Hawaii asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I take this time again to call upon the leadership of the House of Representatives to listen to the cries for reform from the people of this country.

The Republicans are always saying that they are on the top of the issues that the people cry out for. I cannot think of anything that is more of concern to the people of this country than the articles that they keep reading in the newspaper about hundreds of thousands of dollars that are coming into our national parties and the huge political committees out of control, without regulation, without accountability.

Mr. Speaker, we know that these contributions are having a serious impact not only upon the kind of corrupt legislation that sneaks through this House at midnight without our knowledge, but also a corrupting influence on the public's attitude about elections.

For ourselves, when we put out our campaign solicitations we put right on it that the limitation is \$1,000 per election. The PAC's know they have \$5,000. Why can we not regulate soft money and ban it completely?

HOUSE SHOULD REPEAL GIVE- AWAY TO BIG TOBACCO INTER- ESTS

(Mrs. ROUKEMA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, 95 to 3. That was the vote in the United States Senate yesterday to repeal that special midnight multi-billion dollar windfall for the big tobacco companies.

Mr. Speaker, the handwriting is on the wall here. It is now time for the House to follow suit. I would be willing to bet that my colleagues did not know that that provision was in the final version of the bill. We had no idea that it was there. In fact, we had to read about it in the newspapers.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind my colleagues that I am circulating a letter to Speaker GINGRICH asking that he schedule an up-or-down vote on repeal of this onerous provision. If my colleagues oppose this secret giveaway to big tobacco, sign my letter. They should go on record now and show their constituents that they certainly do not support the middle-of-the-night, under-the-table procedure that was used to enact this provision.

I ask the Speaker to right that wrong now. The handwriting is on the wall. Let us follow the action in the Senate.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE SYSTEM IS BROKEN AND NEEDS FIXING

(Ms. WOOLSEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, the American people are talking, but the Republican leadership is not listening.

Mr. Speaker, the people are telling this Congress that they are sick and tired of big money flooding into the halls of Government, and they are fed up with special interests taking priority over the national interests. Mr. Speaker, most of all, they are fed up that the Republican leadership still refuses to act.

Mr. Speaker, let us hold hearings, review the good bills that have already been drafted, and pass meaningful campaign finance reform legislation.

Mr. Speaker, they say that "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." I say that our campaign finance system is broke and it needs fixing.

SCHOOL CHOICE AND EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNTS WILL GIVE STUDENTS HOPE

(Mr. ADERHOLT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, for many of our country's poorest children, education is their one ticket out of poverty. In fact, even children in truly horrible schools manage to make

it out of their destitution by relentless determination and plain old hard work.

But, Mr. Speaker, children should not have to pass through metal detectors on their way through the schoolhouse door. If kids are more worried about becoming victims of violence than about getting an "A" on the next exam, how can we expect them to perform their best?

Mr. Speaker, in the face of school violence and disorderly classrooms, to whom can the kids turn? Why, their parents, of course. But what if their parents lack the resources to pull them out of horrible schools?

Mr. Speaker, while the special interests join together in saying too bad or offer up worthless promises, conservatives offer these kids hope in the form of school choice and education savings accounts.

Mr. Speaker, hope is a commodity in short supply in many of our Nation's poorest communities. School choice and education savings accounts give kids and their parents a reason to hope.

DEMOCRATS PUSH NATIONAL EDUCATION AGENDA

(Mr. WYNN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WYNN. Mr. Speaker, today Democrats want to improve education in America. We want to do it because education is the key to our democracy. We want to do it, more importantly, because education is the key to our children's future.

In the first instance, Democrats believe we need national standards. The fact is that algebra is the same whether a student is from Maine, Missouri or whether they are from my State of Maryland. We need to be able to measure whether our students can master algebra and other subjects so they can compete against their foreign counterparts. We need national standards.

Second, we need school construction funds. We hear the Republicans jump up and say, oh, schools are a local issue. Yes, Mr. Speaker, they are a local issue. But the fact again is that local communities need help. We have crumbling schools. Almost a third of our schools need repairs. They need to fix broken windows and leaking roofs. We have overcrowded schools all over America.

Mr. Speaker, we here in Congress have a duty and responsibility to help local communities. Families play the most critical role, but families cannot build schools alone. Families cannot repair roofs alone. We need a national education agenda that the Democrats are pushing.

QUESTIONS ON CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

(Mr. THUNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)